



Providing Professional Guidance for Business Growth

December 14, 2015

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Spotlight on Success – Treasure Breads

Geneva Pedersen started Treasure Breads in 2007, essentially by accident. She wanted to teach her son Calvin, aged three at the time, about helping children in need. They baked a few loaves of sweet bread, sold them at a neighborhood garage sale, and donated the proceeds. End of story...

Except that it wasn't. Shortly after the garage sale, she started getting calls from people who bought her bread asking where they could get more. That was the beginning of Treasure Breads - a small business offering a delectable assortment of gourmet sweet breads for fundraisers, business gifting, or purchase on-line or at area farmers markets.

Ms. Pedersen (and Calvin) decided to give the recipes a try at the Yorkville farmers market, where she gained immediate following selling 30-50 loaves every week. Calvin's preschool soon asked Geneva if they could do a fundraiser with the breads, and Treasure Breads found its first true niche! Word spread, and local scouting organizations, music groups and sports teams readily took to selling Treasure Bread to support their organizations.

A few years later, Ms. Pedersen's sister, Rena, had just graduated from DePaul College of Law. While waiting for the results of her BAR exam, she started helping in the business. She became hooked on entrepreneurship and decided to stay with the business. By the end of 2014, they were baking 180 loaves per week at the kitchen in Chapel on the Green in Yorkville, IL.

The pair was referred to the **Illinois Small Business Development Center at Waubensee Community College** in February, 2015, after telling a friend they felt they had grown the business as far as they were able. Having investigated contract baking they were unsure how to move forward.

Working with the SBDC, they were able to evaluate their numbers, implement QuickBooks, negotiate pricing with a contract baker, TF Processors in Elk Grove Village, and put a growth plan in place. By September, they were baking 1200 loaves of bread each month.

"Growing Treasure Breads continues to be an amazing adventure," said Ms. Pedersen. "Each small step has been important, and we feel that each day is another opportunity to make a difference in the world with our product. Owning a business can seem all consuming at times, and as soon as we sat down with **Harriet Parker, our SBDC business advisor**, we felt supported and encouraged to continue following our dream. The SBDC has provided us with a perspective that we could not get from inside the business. Harriet keeps us on track and continually brings us back to doing the next right thing."

In October, after several baking trials to perfect the recipe and the packaging, Geneva and Rena switched all baking operations over to their contract bakers and formally launched their business gifting program.

As a testimony to the quality and "delicious-ness" of the Treasure Breads product, one financial advisor, after sending loaves to all of his clients, reported that 80% of his clients called him to comment on how great it was - a tremendous return on his investment!! Find Treasure Breads online at <http://www.treasurebreadsinc.com>

SBDC's In The News – Forbes Article

The article below ran in Forbes in September. It explains the incredible value of the SBDC network. <http://www.forbes.com/sites/tykiisel/2015/09/17/growing-a-small-business-creating-jobs-and-leveraging-resources-like-sbdc/>

Maximizing Neoserra – Data Entry Checks Done When Entering an Advising Session

Neoserra performs certain data entry checks throughout the application to avoid accidental mistakes in certain record types. This FAQ lists out some of the more common data entry checks performed that are native to the application - meaning they cannot be configured by the administrator. <https://support.outreachsystems.com/resources/help/neoserra/faq.jsp?id=n247>

Valued Resources – Press Release Wizard

Take a look at www.aabacosmallbusiness.com to view an easy way to use their press release wizard. See the link below.

<https://www.aabacosmallbusiness.com/advisor/business-tools/press-release-wizard>

Network News and Moves - Saving Grace Beauty Wins First Round of InnovateHER Contest



Metro East resident and Southern Illinois University Edwardsville graduate Erica Harriss has captured first prize in the local InnovateHER Business Challenge and hopes to vie for a spot in the national competition in early 2016.

In early September, the SBA chose the Illinois Metro East Small Business Development Center at SIUE to host a local business plan competition in the first stage of the Challenge. More than 200 entities across the U.S. were selected as host organizations with a total of four in the St. Louis metro area.

Harriss, founder of Saving Grace Beauty LLC, submitted her online application in October. She pitched her business concept to a panel of five judges in mid-November. On Friday, Dec. 4, the judges presented a \$2,500 prize provided by Centruze Bank to Harriss as the unanimous winner. In addition, Harriss will receive an array of in-kind legal services from Mathis, Marifian and Richter Ltd. of Belleville.

The winning pitch by Harriss centered on a product that she developed and created in her basement in Glen Carbon. Saving Grace Hair Powder is an all-natural, daily-use hair care product that easily covers growing roots and extends the time between hair coloring treatments. Saving Grace Hair Powder comes in four basic colors that address the needs of most female and male customers.

Harriss, who officially began selling her products in November 2014, says the Illinois Metro East SBDC was instrumental in assisting her. "Small Business Specialist Jo Ann DiMaggio May and Director Patrick McKeehan have been extremely helpful, providing expertise on business plan development, marketing and more," Harriss said. "I realized this was a real opportunity when a local hair salon called and asked about carrying my products. My next step was to attend a workshop at SIUE for starting a new business and get the help I needed to launch my startup."

"Erica Harriss' Saving Grace Beauty is a great example of how the SBDC is able to elevate a hardworking startup to a national stage," said McKeehan.

State of Change - Stakeholder Update – Director Jim Schultz

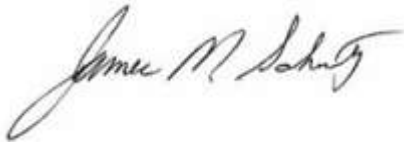
December 2015

Since my appointment as Director of the Illinois Department of Commerce in February, 2015, I have been traveling around Illinois and meeting with economic development groups, local business leaders, and public officials to learn more about the opportunities and challenges they face in their businesses and communities. In conjunction with the community meetings, we are improving and expanding existing programs and contemplating developing new programs that can provide additional local/regional tools to create jobs and greater opportunity in our state. Recently, the Administration announced changes to the Department's EDGE Tax Credit program to balance investment in Illinois with taxpayer benefits. With new policies that protect taxpayers while promoting job creation in place, the Department is now prepared to move forward with EDGE tax credit approvals and certification. We look forward to working with businesses looking to relocate or grow in Illinois.

One of my goals as Director is to build meaningful relationships between the Department of Commerce and our partners throughout the state. While every town, city, or village I've visited has unique strengths and challenges, I've also found a shared resiliency, work ethic, and sense of community that bring us together as Illinoisans. There's no doubt that our state faces significant challenges. However, I believe together we have the necessary resources and "Illinois-strong" determination to turn our state around. Coordination and cooperation between state and local development efforts are vital to reenergizing our business environment and promoting economic growth throughout Illinois. The Department of Commerce is committed to fostering these relationships through continuous, open, and two-way communication. In order to facilitate information sharing, our Department will distribute quarterly newsletters updating our partners and stakeholders on our programs and initiatives throughout the state.

I'm continuously reminded of the strengths that, when given room to flourish, can make our state great. I strongly believe that the people of Illinois are one of our state's greatest assets, offering a level of skill, education, and loyalty that is not easily found anywhere else in the country. As I continue my tour of every county in Illinois, I am eager to continue learning from all of YOU about how the Department of Commerce can help Illinois families, businesses, and communities thrive. Click [here](#) to view online.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "James M. Schultz", written in a cursive style.

Jim Schultz

Small Business Awards - Nominations Due Soon

Submit your nomination today! We are looking for a diverse group of small businesses for the National Small Business Week awards in the following categories.

- Small Business Person of the Year Award
- Small Business Exporter of the Year
- Phoenix Award for Small Business Disaster Recovery
- Phoenix Award for Outstanding Contributions to Disaster Recovery
- Federal Procurement Award- Small Business Prime Contractor of the Year Award
- Federal Procurement Award- Small Business Subcontractor of the Year Award
- Federal Procurement Award- Dwight D. Eisenhower Award for Excellence
- 8(a) Graduate of the Year Award
- Small Business Development Center Excellence and Innovation Award
- Veterans Business Outreach Center Excellence in Service Award
- Women's Business Center of Excellence Award
- Jody C. Raskind Lender of the Year
- Small Business Investment Company of the Year

Are you our next winner? Apply online today: <http://awards.sba.gov>.

Webinar – How to Build Your First Mobile App

Illinois SBDCs, the SBDC at UIC has partnered with Strategic Systems International (SSI) to offer a webinar at 1 pm on Thursday, January 28 entitled “How to Build Your First Mobile App”.

Learn from experts about how to approach building a mobile application and explore various do-it-yourself or outsourcing options. This webinar is especially designed for the non-technical in mind. We will walk participants through from researching to storyboarding, to then sharing various available options to develop the app. Additionally we will discuss how to perform user testing and steps to take post launch.

Registration details are still being finalized, but we would like to allow other SBDCs to promote this to their clients and contacts as well. We intend to ask each attendee to identify which SBDC they heard about the webinar from so after the event you will get a list of attendees who attended from your SBDC.

If you would like to be part of this and promote this to your clients and contacts, please let me know by COB on 1/6/16. Thanks, Steve Bob, sbob@uic.edu.

America’s SBDC Network Connect Newsletter

Please [CLICK HERE](#) to view the latest edition of the [America’s SBDC Network Connect Newsletter](#).



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The **WEEKLY CONNECTION** is distributed by the Illinois SBDC and Illinois Department of Commerce Office of Entrepreneurship, Innovation & Technology each Monday to members of the Illinois SBDC Network to provide our service delivery partners with current updates on small business issues, opportunities and resources. Please send information to share with the Illinois SBDC Network to Tom.Becker@illinois.gov. Please feel free to forward this update to any other interested resource providers and key stakeholders.

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